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LBJ Is Making a List Of Likely Scapegoats In Dominican Impasse

Special to Buffalo Evening News

WASHINGTON, May 22—Presidential advisers are now looking for scapegoats to blame for the Dominican Republic mess. The fact that such a hunt is on is sufficient proof that the administration realizes the whole military intervention operation has been badly mishandled in its follow-through phases.

The effort to pin the blame elsewhere than on President Johnson has started with a rush in the last 24 hours. The first proposed candidates for the

Commentary On the News

White House doghouse have been U. S. Ambassador W. Tapley Bennett Jr., the new CIA chief, Admiral William F. Raborn Jr., and Undersecretary of State Thomas C. Mann.

Long List Possible

It does not matter whether any of these three are actually culpable. There has to be a scapegoat list, even if, as at present, it is passed along surreptitiously by officials whose tips usually reflect the White House line.

Because the errors in judgment or misinterpretation of the Administration's program for bringing order out of chaos, involve Mr. Bennett, diplomatic, military and intelligence agencies, the list of scapegoats could be pretty long.

Certainly it could be more extensive than the roll of wrong guessers and blundering operatives in John F. Kennedy's Bay of Pigs fiasco in 1961.

Comparatively innocent high officials had to take the rap under Mr. Kennedy in 1961, such as the then CIA head Allen Dulles, his deputy Richard M.

Bissell Jr., and the then chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Lyman Lemnitzer. But Mr. Kennedy at that time accepted the whole blame himself. To date the White House has shown no similar inclination.

Digs Aimed at CIA

Instead, Ambassador Bennett is being blamed on various vague counts: that he failed to have the right contacts in the Dominican Republic, that he overemphasized the danger to Americans in urging the President to rush the marines in on April 28.

Admiral Raborn, born of the CIA, is accused of making too emotional an appeal to the White House about the Communist threat. This charge, from administration sources that should know better, makes little sense. Admiral Raborn had just been sworn in on April 28 when Mr. Johnson ordered the marines in. The main CIA appeal for prompt action came from retiring CIA chief John McCone.

But the digs at Admiral Raborn are basically aimed at the intelligence operation he heads. The State Department and Pentagon have consistently cast aspersions on the value of CIA "evaluations."

Mann's Views Respected

Undersecretary of State Mann is caught in the scapegoat hunt mainly because he has been con-

sidered more instrumental than any other adviser in the President's decision to act at once. On hemispheric affairs his views have consistently carried great weight with LBJ.

The inside administration intrigue in this scapegoat hunt has odd aspects. Some of those trying to make Ambassador Bennett the whipping boy are really after Mr. Mann. The latter is considered responsible for Mr. Bennett's being in Santo Domingo in the first place.

There is an almost hysterical effort by those in the possible line of Presidential fire to pass the buck to other agencies and individuals.

Bundy Is Blamed

For example, certain high intelligence officials have the knife out for McGeorge Bundy, White House national security adviser. Mr. Bundy is blamed for the White House decision to send a special mission on a desperation basis to Santo Domingo last Saturday.

The aim was to end the fighting. This mission sought unsuccessfully to form a coalition government headed by Antonio Guzman, a close friend of exiled President Juan Bosch.

Mr. Guzman's left-wing status was such as to have made him suspect, but it is held in intelligence circles here that the Bundy mission refused to accept this evaluation of Mr. Guzman.

On almost every aspect of the present messed-up situation, false notes have been struck here. What leaks out of the State Department, Pentagon or CIA privately has no relation to the statements issued publicly by the Administration even at the White House level.

Short Stay Envisaged

The White House again insisted formally Friday that our troops were in strictly a neutral posture

in the Dominican Republic. "All the evidence from the scene, including motion pictures and comments from our paratroopers and marines themselves, indicates our military is being chummy with the junta, while the Bundy mission has been chummy with the rebels—at least on certain days of the week.

The buckpassing, the lack of official candor and all the backbiting going on here suggest only one thing. The President has found himself boxed in and is trying desperately to find a way out. What basically went wrong?

There is no argument about that. Mr. Johnson was led to believe that once we put our troops ashore the whole mess could be cleared up in a few days with a temporary coalition government operating to stabilize the country. Instead, this is the fourth week of our intervention, and no immediate solution is in sight.



Mr. Bennett

Mr. Mann

Mr. Bundy

Mr. Raborn

Mr. Guzman

Mr. Bosch

Mr. McCone

Mr. Lemnitzer

Mr. Dulles

Mr. Kennedy

Mr. Johnson

Mr. Nixon

Mr. Ford

Mr. Carter

Mr. Reagan

Mr. Bush

Mr. Clinton

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